

greatest gift we can give to our children—the gift of a strong and viable education.

Both my parents being educators, I grew up surrounded by reminders of how important public education is in America. As a parent myself of three school-aged children attending public schools in Fort Collins, I understand the value of liberal access to community schools and academic professionals.

Indeed, the reason I have devoted nine years in the Colorado State Senate and my first year in the United States Congress to improving the quality of local public schools is because I am convinced my parents were right. The future strength of the Republic lies in the hands of a well-educated citizenry.

Clearly, parents bear the primary responsibility for educating their children. Public school districts were established by states to assist, and it is at the state level, and under state constitutions that public school systems are properly organized. In Colorado, the management of public schools is entrusted to 176 locally-elected boards.

As a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workplace, I face routinely those who would dismantle America's traditions of local control and parental authority with respect to educating kids. Their preference always seems to entail centralizing education authority in Washington, D.C. as a way to address any shortcomings of America's schools.

The White House, for example, is working to abandon independent standardized testing in favor of a government-owned national test. The administration has already engaged the early stages of developing a national curriculum.

The Federal government actually has no Constitutional authority to manage public schools, but it gets around that barrier by handing out lots of cash. With every federal dollar comes strings. Of course, no school is forced to take the money, but few can resist.

Deploying such strategies, the federal government has found ways to influence almost every aspect of public schooling from the design of new school buildings, to the qualifications of teachers, to students' diets. Rarely do these tactics improve the quality of education, but more often only suppress the ability of local schools and teachers to do the jobs for which they are best trained.

My strenuous objections to various schemes to centralize education authority in Washington have at times been misinterpreted by my political foes to suggest I am somehow "anti-education." Quite the opposite is true.

My firm resistance to federalizing public schools is based entirely on my belief that public schools should be decentralized, local, parent-drive, student-centered, efficient institutions which offer competitive services enabling students to be the world's best.

We would all do well to remember that the most valuable gift we can give to any child is a quality education. As both a father, and a member of Congress, ensuring an effective public school system will continue to be among my chief objectives.

## IN COMMEMORATION OF SAINT DAVID'S DAY

### HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 12, 1998*

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Saint David, the Welsh Patron Saint. Many of my friends and colleagues may not know that I am of Welsh descent—but then again maybe my name, Lewis, gives me away. I am very proud of the Welsh blood running through my veins. What American wouldn't be if he knew just how many great Americans were also Welsh! Let me take a moment to share some interesting facts with you.

Did you know that twenty percent of our Pilgrim Fathers were Welsh? Almost fifty percent of the signers of the American Declaration of Independence were also Welsh or of Welsh heritage—as were nine of the Presidents of the United States, including John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln. There are just too many great Welsh-Americans to name!!

Another interesting fact I would like to share with you pertains to Saint Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland. Did you know that Saint Patrick was really a Welshman? As a boy of sixteen, Patrick was taken from the Welsh village where he was born by an Irish slave trading party. He was a slave in Ireland until the age of twenty-two, when he escaped and returned to Wales. Later, he became a priest and was sent back to Ireland where the Welshman Patrick became revered as Saint Patrick of Ireland.

When you are in Washington, D.C., the more athletically-inclined Welsh among you might like to hike half-way up the stairs in the Washington Monument to read an inscription there: "Fy Iait, Fy Ngwlad, Fy Nghenedl, Wales—Cymru Am Byth." My language, my country, my nation, Wales—Wales forever!

On March 1st, Welsh Americans across the Nation will honor the birth of Saint David, the Patron Saint of Wales. At the Welsh Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, the Welsh Choir of Southern California will give its premiere performance, conducted by famous, Welsh-born Hollywood composer Michael Lewis! I know that this concert will be a treat for all who hear it. I only wish I could be present!

I would say to my colleagues, let us all remember that March 1st is the birthday of Saint David, the Patron Saint of Wales.

## COMMENDING THE SCHOOLS OF BASEL, SWITZERLAND, ON THE HOLOCAUST EDUCATION PROGRAM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 12, 1998*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in commending the public schools of the Canton and City of Basel, Switzerland, on the comprehensive program of Holocaust education which has been adopted for their public schools.

Much has been written and said about the outrageous behavior of some Swiss banking executives with regard to deposits of gold and other valuables by Holocaust victims during the period before and during World War II, but little attention has been focused on the outstanding degree to which the people of Basel and other Swiss cities and cantons have assumed the responsibility of teaching Swiss children about the horrors of the Holocaust. By making this a communal priority, they have determined to never let such atrocities take place again.

The schools of Basel address the subject of the Holocaust with children of all ages, at all academic levels and in a wide variety of disciplines, primarily in history and in German language and culture classes. In the *Wieterbildungsschule* (elementary schools), young people learn about the fate of children in the Third Reich, the resistance efforts against Nazi occupation, and other introductory topics ranging from a basic understanding of anti-Semitism to the existence of ghettos, concentration camps, and Hitler's Final Solution.

In the secondary level (Grades 5–9) adolescents encounter a wealth of documentary material dealing with anti-Semitism and the murder of the Jews, including *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the new reader *Bilder in Kopf* (Pictures in the Head), and numerous short stories which provide an assortment of different approaches to the Holocaust. In *Gymnasiums* (high schools), older student face an even more comprehensive and substantive treatment of the topic. They survey various theories dealing with the development and forms of anti-Semitism, as well as an analytical and unprejudiced look at their own country's position during World War II. Such syllabus topics include thoughtful subjects such as "The Refugee Question in the Second World War and Neutrality."

Mr. Speaker, the people of Basel have recognized the truth of the oft-quoted Santayana observation, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Their schools are helping to raise a new generation of citizens unfettered by hatreds and prejudices of the past, a people that can use the painful lessons of decades ago to engender tolerance and understanding in the future. It is my pleasure to recognize and to commend the fruitful efforts the people of Basel.

## TRIBUTE TO SAM JOHNSON "OPERATION HOMECOMING" 25TH ANNIVERSARY

### HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 12, 1998*

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, today, Thursday, February 12, 1998 marks the 25th anniversary of Operation Homecoming, the day on which the first group of heroes whose experience as prisoners of war ended as they were released from captivity in North Vietnam. Our colleague, Representative SAM JOHNSON was one of those heroes.

SAM JOHNSON began his 29-year career in the United States Air Force after realizing his love for adventure and his love of flying. Although his training prepared him for the war,